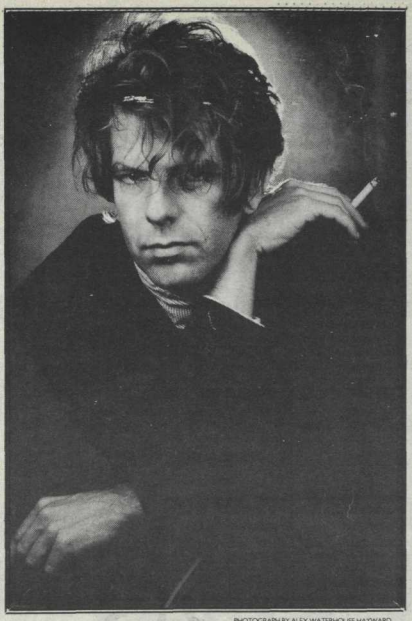
DISCORDER

A guide to CITR fm 102
CABLE 100

Why Isn't This Man a Star?

CD Gets POISONED



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX WATERHOUSE HAYWARD

"Five minutes of my time" is how Art Bergmann describes "Hawaii," the underground hit he wrote while in the Young Canadians. Those five minutes have hounded him since. Like the time in 1983 when Bergmann was onstage with Los Popularos at UBC: some rabid drunk, recognizing Art from the YCs, spent an hour howling at the top of his lungs, "Young Canadians ... fuckin' Hawaii .. play fuckin' Hawaii ... *leschogo to fuckin' Hawaii-i-i*"

"It bothers me," says Bergmann, "because I think I've written a lot better songs than that. Not just that, but that EP sold about 5,000 copies, and I never saw a cent of it. The guy who owned Quintessence must have ... no, I better not say that. I don't need a lawsuit."

It would be easy to accuse Bergmann of being ungrateful for past success, but he has a point: he *has* written better songs, and none have received the attention given "Hawaii." After seven years and four records with three different bands, he's in the unenviable position of being, as one wit put it, "a semi-legendary folk hero of the Vancouver alternative music scene."

Roughly translated, that means that while there may be a loyal audience who will look forward to hearing the songs he's recorded with his new band Poisoned, there are a great many more people out there who will, at least for now, continue to say, "Oh, yeah ... Art Bergmann ... wasn't he the guy? ... yeah, *let's go to fuckin' Hawai-i-i-*"

It shouldn't happen that way, and maybe it won't. The songs Bergmann's recorded with Poisoned are as good as anything that has come out of Vancouver: sophisticated, well-crafted songs that still have a raw edge. Bergmann's voice cuts through with emotion and intensity, a mixture of sincerity and cynicism. The tapes have a lot of people saying that this could be the big break for Art Bergmann, the one that brings him to a big audience.

Bergmann is more cautious. "Could be, could be; right now, we're still underground. I mean, I always think that a new band is going to be the one that makes it. You might say I never let my dreams die."

Looking back on his career, it's easy to understand the guarded optimism. Great things have been predicted for Art Bergmann, and not without basis. But in the end, something always seems to go wrong, and the prophecy and the potential remain unfulfilled.

The Shmorgs were the first Bergmann-led band to make it to vinyl, with a record released on their own Stray label in early 1978.

"That was a bunch of guys from White Rock and Surrey. We started out as a really basic three-chord rock 'n roll and went on from there as I learned to write songs. We went through a bunch of different lineups, and I ended up doing all the writing for the band, which was a real burden. And then we were stupid enough to put out a record." The LP, simply entitled *Shmorgs*, is an uneven, but nonetheless interesting, record that, despite Bergmann's disclaimer, is well worth looking for. Considering how the album sold, however, the Bergmann basement might be a good place to start your search.

After the Shmorgs, Bergmann went on to form the K-Tels with Jim Bescott and Barry Taylor. K-Tel International was not amused: the people who brought you Veg-A-Matic and *Myron Florens' Greatest Hits* threatened legal action, and the band was renamed the Young Canadians.

It was with the Young Canadians that Bergmann came closest to success. The band released two excellent EPs (including that "five minutes of my time" that continues to plague Bergmann), toured with the Boomtown Rats, and collected impressive notices and fans across North America.

Yet for all their apparent success, the Young Canadians remained an underground band; radio ignored them, as did the big record companies. As with any other "underground" act in the mass-media world of North America, they reached a point where they had to break into the mainstream or break up.

"It was time for a change," is Bergmann's reply to queries about the split. "Besides, we weren't big enough. I like to work in a *band*, a situation where there's a lot of creative argument going on. Maybe *that's* my problem. But the Young Canadians were just too small for us to rub off on each other."

He got the band he wanted soon after, forming what was unfortunately described as "Vancouver's first punk super-group:" Los Popularos.

The band first emerged as a "fuck band" on the Bud Luxford compilation and featured Gord Nicholl and Tony Bardach (ex-Pointed Sticks), Buck Cherry (ex-Modernettes), Zippy Pinhead (ex-Dils), and Bill Shirt (ex-Active Dog), along with Bergmann. Originally dubbed Los Radicos Popularos, the band played for the hell of it, more often than not for free.

The "Radicos" was dropped when the band became a serious project. Burdened by inflated expectations, the band almost didn't survive their first tour. Cherry left, and the band laid low long enough to shed the ludicrous "supergroup" tag and coalesce into a pretty decent pop band. Los Pops managed to put out a moderately interesting single and an EP, *Born Free*, which, although spoiled by muddy production, showcased Bergmann, Shirt and Nicholl as talented and capable tunesmiths.

"Like all great bands, we were really awful sometimes," says Bergmann of Los Popularos. "In the end we broke up because we couldn't record anymore. We'd signed a three year contract with these people, and after *Born Free* didn't make them a million bucks, they decided that they wouldn't give us any more money to record, but they wouldn't release us from our contract. And you can only play live without a record for so long before you end up banging your head against the wall. So we wrote them letters, which got no answers. Finally, we just decided to call it quits. But I still get together with Bill and Gord to write the occasional pop tune about sex, death and religion."

Which brings us, and Art, to the present, and Poisoned. Bergmann is back up front, singing his own songs, supported by a band made up of Ted Rich, Fred Hamilton and Taylor Nelson-Little (all of whom most recently appeared with Psychic Healers) and Murray Anderchak. He's recorded 10 songs for a demo tape (three of which can be heard on CITR) and is planning to play around Vancouver as a prelude to taking another grab at the gold (maybe brass?) ring.

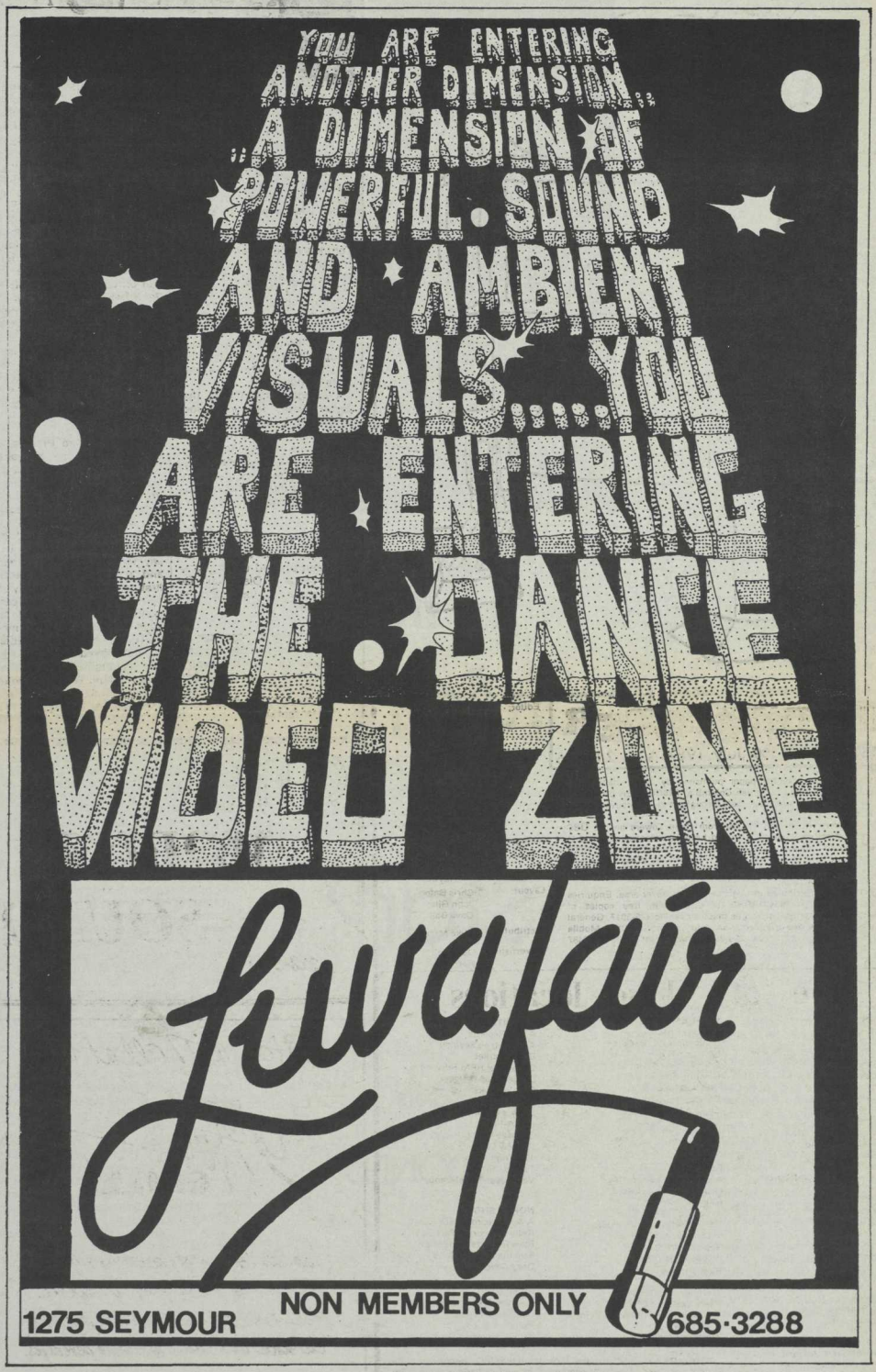
There are a lot of people pulling for Bergmann, a lot of people saying that Poisoned is *the one*. Anticipation is in the air, inflating expectations once again. We'll have to wait and see if Poisoned can avoid the pitfalls Bergmann's other bands have encountered. Bergmann seems to be taking it pretty much in stride.

"I don't know. I just want to get back to playing live and then do some recording in a 24-track; then we'll see what happens. It's tough to get back to being the focus of a band, singing and so on. It's a lot easier just staying in the back playing guitar and doing backups. But yeah, we'll see what happens ..."

And, if it happens, maybe Art Bergmann can leave that particular five minutes of his time behind and say once and for all -- "Fuck Hawaii."

--CD

Poisoned will be appearing July 20th with the Actionauts aboard the good ship "Hollyburn" in yet another Boating with Bud extravaganza. [You owe me one, Luxford.]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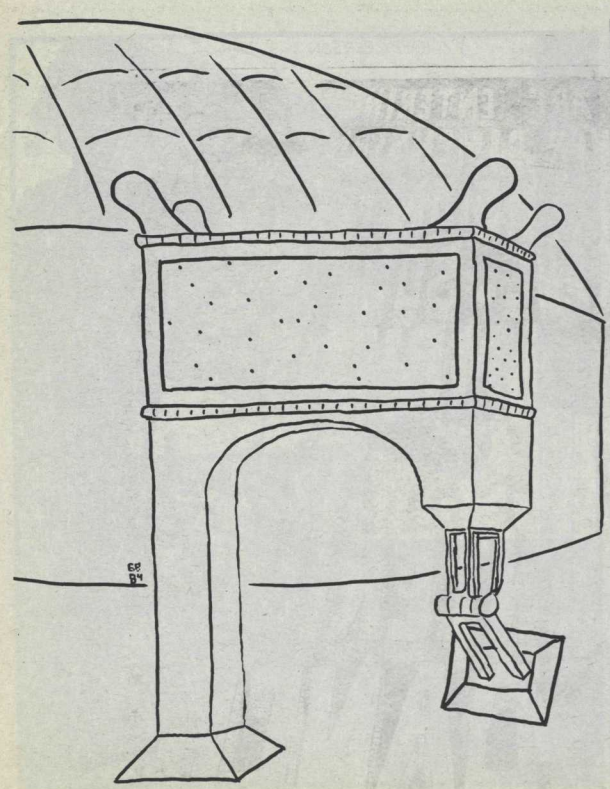

air HEAD

c/o CITR Radio 6138 S.U.B. Blvd.
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 2A5

Dear Airhead,

First of all, I'd like to dedicate the entire playlist show to a dear friend (whom I'll call Mr. E), because at the present time he can't p.ck it up on his receiver, and he just doesn't know what he's missing.

Secondly, after reading Tom Harrison's many reviews and listening to his silly pubescent voice on "Soundproof" ... I think you should continue your "Sneer of the Month" episodes and throw his pitiful face in it. For "Occupation," you can fill in "Superficial Suckwinder" and for "Likes," "Only his own taste in music."

I've got to hand it to that Jason Grant fellow. Before reading the write-up in the Sun, I had no idea he was so young, yet he's brilliant, very literate, and dedicated to CITR. His reviews and random notes top Harrison's any day. I'm impressed.

Regards,
Anacin

P.S. -- I noticed the address for information on Jonathan Richman printed up in a previous issue of Discorder. Do you happen to have one for The Cure?

Take it easy on poor Tom. It can't be easy writing for the ugliest newspaper in Canada. For information on The Cure write: P.O. Box 2al London, England W.1a 1al

Dear Airhead,

Who is this Sukhvinder Johal, hater of all he does not understand? In his interview, turned editorial, with Linton Kwesi Johnson, I was disgusted to read his needless views on Rastafari. Does Sukhvinder really believe that the Rasta-influenced reggae does not make political statements?

I was also shocked to be called naive and myopic by someone who does not know Rasta or the beneficial effects the Rastafarian lifestyle has had on countless non-Rastas. Rastafari is not only the following of an Ethiopian king, but a complex and caring lifestyle.

Please, in the future, stick to the facts, and if you feel it and know it, only then say it, because such prejudice is really the root of the world's troubles.

Now look here Praises, ol' chap, it'd be all too easy for I & I to get into a theological discussion in these columns. I mean, it's hard to actually *discuss* religion with a zealot (ask the Sikhs and Hindus in India, ask the Catholics and Protestants in Ulster)! Suffice to say that apart from 'myopic' and 'naive,' which, I'll be the first to admit, are merely my opinions, the rest of that paragraph is true: I did 'stick to the facts.' By the way, what's more the root of the world's troubles: a questioning analysis like mine or religious zealousness like yours? (Clue: You may find the answer in LKJ's *Age of Reality off Forces of Victory.*)

—SJ

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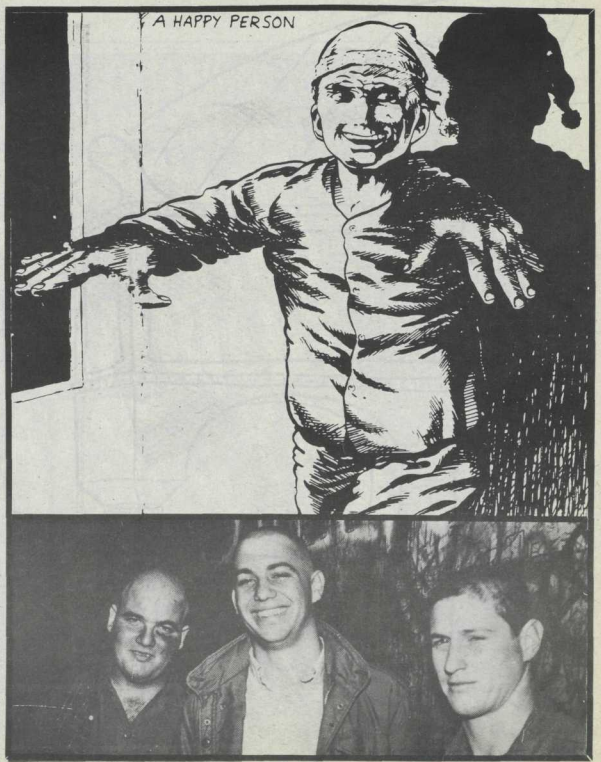
MINUTEMEN

Timekeepers: Steve Robertson & Mike Dennis

Imagine it.



You're in a hot, sweaty little basement closet with about 100 other people. You forget what this club's name is, but it doesn't matter because, aside from the fact that bands play here from time to time, there is nothing here to suggest that this place keeps regular hours. The decor is decidedly concrete. There's warm beer for sale until it runs out or the cops arrive. You sip your tepid brew and hope the band will be good, all the while remembering that you missed The Darby Crash Home Movie Festival to be here. You've heard that these Minutemen are good. Good and hardcore! The lights go down and bodies start nudging toward the stage. Three rather nondescript fellows walk on, two of whom are rather large. They must be the road crew or something. You don't have a chance to conjecture any further ... The Minutemen have launched their mutant punk funk barrage.

The best bands are always the most difficult to pin down with labels. The Minutemen are widely regarded as part of the California hardcore music scene. It is true that the band is from San Pedro, California (or "Peedro," as they like to call it), but in terms of their music, "hardcore" is a bit of a misnomer. White funk on fast dope might be a better description of a typical Minuteman song. Breakneck quasi-funk rhythms with jagged shards of sharp, trebly guitar jumping in and out like a sing-stringed pogo stick; short, intense and to the point.

The Minutemen are D. Boon on guitar and vocals, Mike Watt on bass and vocals and George Hurley on drums. Boon and Watt started playing together some 12 years ago and eventually formed a band called the Reactionaries. "When we were just starting out, we couldn't really play. I learned guitar by listening to CCR, Black Sabbath and Blue Oyster Cult," says Mike Watt. According to Watt, the Reactionaries was just speeded up rock and roll influenced by Sex Pistols, Clash and Jam. "We never knew you could write your own songs. We thought we were too lame." The band only lasted for eight months.

It was January, 1980, when Boon and Watt formed the Minutemen. "We wanted to get rid of a lot of the standard rock trappings, so we stripped the songs down to the bare bones." Watt cites Wire, The Pop Group and Captain Beefheart as primary Minutemen influences. "When I first heard The Pop Group, I was really floored. Here were these guys playing this kind of funk stuff that sounded really white. I didn't know that that kind of music existed." Boon and Watt jammed without a drummer for a short time before recruiting George Hurley, who had played with them before in the Reactionaries. Since 1980, they have released numerous discs, including the highly acclaimed LP *What Makes a Man Start Fires?* Although Watt is the principal songwriter, all three contribute tunes. "Soon we're going to be releasing a double album," says Watt, "45 songs in 35 minutes. We figured that, just for fun, we'd intersperse it all with car noises. None of the songs are about cars, though."

The band are planning extensive touring of North America over the next few months. Last year they supported Black Flag on a European tour and came away rather disillusioned by the British hardcore scene. "They're very conservative over there. The crowd was strictly black leather and porcupine hair. They didn't know what the hell to make of us, that sort of thing. I think that if we'd looked like them, we'd have had half the battle won."

If you don't like hardcore, that does not necessarily mean you won't like the Minutemen. They play hard and fast, but it's not thrash like so much British and American hardcore these days. They'll be appearing in Vancouver on Friday, July 6 at the Waterfront. Tickets are available at Zulu, Odyssey and Collectors' RPM. If you've never heard the Minutemen, phone 228-CITR and say "I wanna hear about five Minutemen songs" (since most of their songs average about one minute in length, such a request probably wouldn't be deemed excessive) or, better yet, catch them live. I hear they're devastating. Just like the missile.

Radio Hell Wants You

Remember how much you HATED Boy Scouts? Dib dib and all that stuff. Or Girl Guides? Or any of those clubs your parents MADE you join? "It's good for you," they said, right? "You'll learn something," right?

CITR isn't like those clubs. It's not good for you at all. In fact, joining CITR will do absolutely nothing for you, except increase your capacities for abnormal behavior, expand your musical tastes and knowledge and --oh, here it comes, right?--you can learn something. About radio, and how it works. And --put down that knife, Earl-- you could get involved in on-air work.

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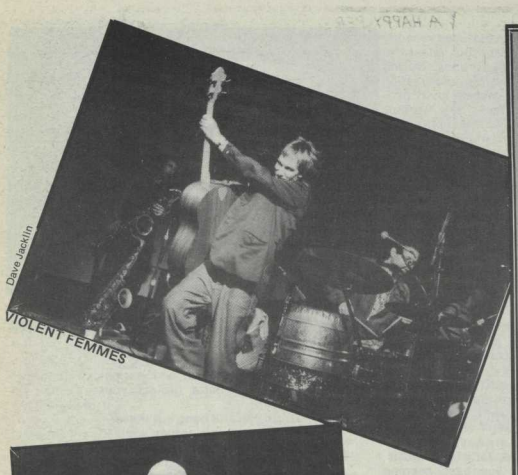


Dave Jacklin

VIOLENT FEMMES

Jim Main

LAURIE ANDERSON

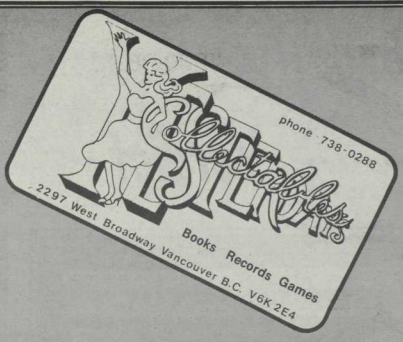
Jim Main

RANK AND FILE

Dave Jacklin

45 Grave

Photos by Dave Jacklin and Jim Main



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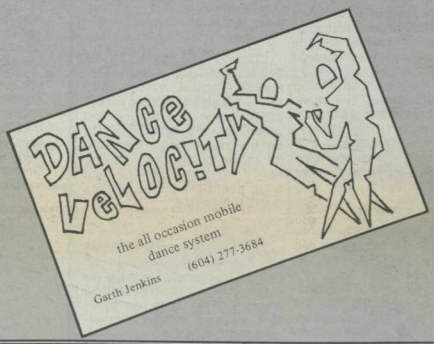
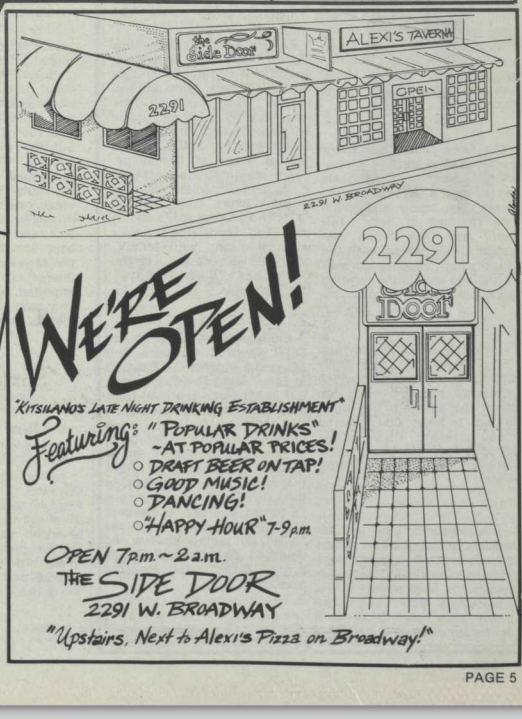
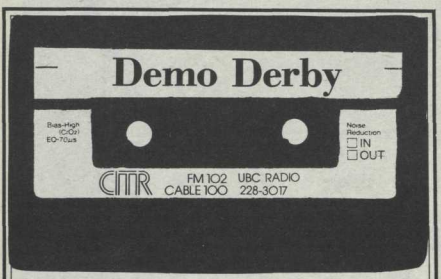




Vinyl Verdict

Demo Derby



You may often wonder why CITR never reviews local demo tapes in DISCORDER. Well, wonder no more, for in this issue we take a look at 15 songs by seven local artists. Although this reviewer readily admits having a strong bias towards music with fast, driving guitars and machine gun drumming (i.e., The Enigmas), the music reviewed here shows, in places, certain songwriting ability, well-crafted textures, and promises much listening enjoyment. (But then again, other bits are kinda dull.)

★★★★★

The two most upbeat demos are those by the **Mike Club** and **Procedures For Approval**, or P.F.A. for short.

P.F.A.'s two songs, "Decadence" and "Waiting for the Wind to Blow" are very reminiscent of early stripped down versions of Ultravox or Simple Minds, with not quite as much drive (perhaps due only to the stark production). Both songs are melodic, with emphasis on catchy rhythm hooks. Hopefully, the band will continue to record.

The **Mike Club**'s two songs revolve around Rachael Melas' brilliant basslines and Michaela Arrichello's effervescent vocals. The heavy bass/drum funk rhythms in both "Riff Rapp" and "My Dream" establish a fluid tempo, with the squeaky-high rapping phrased around and around the twisting synchopations. Very good.

Hiroshi Yano's "House" and "Step Down" are both finely structured instrumentals which (strangely enough) seem too short. Just as one is beginning to relax to these slow, layered mood pieces, they rather abruptly fade out, leaving the listener definitely wanting more.

"Bushwacked," by the **Actionauts**, although by no means a monster master rockin' tune like their previous "Hash Assassin," is nevertheless a fine mid-tempo pop song. The overly slick production is a deliberate attempt at getting a major record deal. With at least one company sniffing now, we can only cross our fingers and hope the Actionauts get what they want.

"Down at the Beach" by the **Sound Surfers** is a somewhat slowish, typical melody with fairly standard arrangement and delivery. The playing and production are up to stratch, but the band's songwriting ability seems below their playing ability. At this point the best thing about the Sound Surfers is still their name.

The last two artists, **Emily** and **Family Plot**, have both put out their current material as cassette-only, limited edition releases. The tapes are available at most independent record shops (like Zulu).

Family Plot is Madelaine Morris (ex-**MOEV**) on vocals, and the Addington clan (ex-**Insex**) on drums, synth and two basses. Their four-song tape was recently recorded on a 4-track porta-studio, but the sound does not suffer for the lack of heaps of technology. There are three slower paced songs, and the sinister "Gravedigger," which made it to the CITR Top 5 a few weeks ago. If you liked Madelaine's vocals when she sang with **MOEV**, combined with the sound of The Cure circa "Pornography," you'll love this.

Emily's three songs on the CITR playlist ("My Wife, She Married a Butcher," "Doomed to Fail," and "I've Got a Steel Bar in My Head") are all from her recent cassette release on the MO-DA-MU label. Drum machines and layer upon layer of synth programs are used to weave a rich, pulsing sound that rolls along. "Steel Bar" is the catchiest of the songs, but "Doomed to Fail" is my personal favorite. Eerie, macabre, stylish, but neither shallow nor detached. Dare I say it? This is synth with guts. Recommended.

--Gordon Badanic

Lou Reed resurfaced recently to speak about his latest release, New Sensations. During the course of the conversation we covered music, love, politics, New York, and various other subjects. It was only later when transcribing the interview that I realized that all of Lou's responses were culled directly from the lyrics of his new album.

***

Discorder: The new album is a real comeback for you. Did anything in particular prompt this resurgence?
Lou Reed: The President called me to give me the news/I've been awarded the Nobel Prize in rhythm and blues,/ and Stevie Wonder wants to record one of my songs.
D: That's quite interesting, about the President and all.
LR: Don't want to talk about politics today,/I feel too good, let me have my way.
D: All right, let's talk music, then. Have you been keeping track of the "New Music?"
LR: There's not too much you hear on the radio today.
D: Very true. New Sensations is very basic compared to some of the current over-produced songs on the radio.
LR: I really hope you like it, it isn't very long./It's rooted in the '50s, but it's heart's in 1984.
D: Is there an overall theme to the album?
LR: It reminds me of the movies Marty made about New York/ Those frank and brutal movies that are so brilliant/They're very inspirational, I love the thing they do.
D: New York: the most dangerous city in the world and damn proud of it.
LR: I got my Mace and you got yours/You gotta protect your own life.
D: Do you still hang out there?
LR: The other night we went to see Sam's play/It was very physical; it held you to the stage/Here's to Travis Bickle and here's to Johnny Boy/ Growing up in the mean streets of New York.
D: Sounds like you're mellowing. Where do you stand on nuclear arms?
LR: I would not run from the holocaust/I would not run from the bomb/I'd welcome the chance to meet my maker/and fly into the sun.
D: Any last words?
LR: When it's all too much you turn the TVset on/and light a cigarette/Then a Public Service Announcement/Come creeping on./You see a lung corroding/ Or a fatal heart attack? Turn to me. Turn to me, turn to me.

--Jim Main

Shriekback

Jam Science

Bonk-chugga chugga-bonk chomp-wizzle wizzle-womp ... speed it up, slow it down, spin it around, throw it up ... nonstop dancing, a little head bashing to the side and oh, so cool.

Jam Science is 40 minutes of repetitive concrete bunker beat ... slap it on and practise the latest groove moves and don't worry about sweat collecting on your brow -- like the weather, this record is cool and dry. Subtle variations in tempo abound, but not enough to distinguish any one track remarkably from the next. The vocals breathe heavily up front, driven by an understated bass score and the pervasive bunker beat. Shriekback may have lost the shriek that gave them an interesting edge on their first imported release, *Tench*, but they can still weave a seductive musical maze.

To cop a quote from Aaron Copland: "The simplest way of listening to music is to listen fof the sheer pleasure of the musical sound itself -- that is the sensual plane." With that in mind, pick up a copy of *Jam Science* and let your body do the thinking.

--Michael Shea

Two years ago amid an unusually hot summer in England, Shriekback released their first single, "Sexthinkone." It sounded like its title -- provocative, sinuous and insinuating, alluring and slightly disturbing. Now, the summer of 1984, and the group, primarily composed of Barry Andrews, Dave Allen and Carl Marsh, have finished recording their second long-playing disc to date, *Jam Science*. The weather forecast: cool and dry.

While *Jam Science* may sound so contrived that it could have been composed by a computer program, Shriekback once again succeeds in constructing a textural aural sculpture (sorry, Hugh) that adds depth to the rigid melodic formula they have confined themselves to. The lyrics are suitably arcane, but who is going to spend the time to decipher their cryptic messages while sliding on the dance floor anyway? After listening to the album several times, I can think of only two conclusions -- either Shriekback has fallen prey to the easy allure of the electronic white funk that left Cabaret Voltaire wailing in the wings OR they have recorded THE dance disc of 1984.

Nocturnal Emissions

Drowning in a Sea of Bliss

Does anyone remember the movie "Fantastic Voyage?" You know, the one in which Raquel Welch, Donald Pleasance and the other human microbes are injected into an ailing scientists's body and subsequently do battle against all sorts of antibodies, organs and other resident bile before taking on the ultimate inner space foe, the big bad brain tumor? If you do, you'll probably agree that it is the all-time greatest --if not the only-- B-grade bio-anatomical thriller.

We know that poor Donald loses his life at the hands (?) of a massive white corpuscle, but one has to wonder at the sequels that might have been spawned had Raquel & Co. foregone that teardrop of deliverance and set up a household inside Dr. Banish's carcass -- "East of Intestine" or perhaps "Indiana Jones and the Orifice of Doom?" Any filmmaker with enough guts (sorry) to undertake such a project would find himself with a ready made soundtrack in Nocturnal Emissions' *"Drowning in a Sea of Bliss,"* required listening for pre-med students and a must for all emetic fans.

To its credit, this marrow-curdling record has tremendous potential as a motivational tool. It will certainly discourage small children from putting foreign objects into their mouths. Unwanted relatives overstaying their welcome? Just slap Nocturnal Emissions onto the turntable, and they'll be waltzing out the door before you can say Pepto-Bismol. The fact that *"Drowning in a Sea of Bliss"* tends to evoke esophageal imagery makes its extremely dangerous listening for compulsive overeaters; "no brekky" appears to be the central motif here.

Hunger pangs and gastric juices aside, there really isn't that much happening on this record. There's plenty of rhythm, but it all reeks of excessive technology; not that I have anything against technology, it's just that so many records of the "industrial" genre are devoid of any human element whatsoever. As Snakefinger so succinctly puts it: "The content gets lighter and more superficial as the technology gets heavier and more predominant until we get to our present situation, where technology is art and the artist just the poor slob that pushes the buttons." Anyone familiar with Snakefinger's work on Ralph Records knows that his attitude toward music is hardly anti-progressive.

Speaking for myself, I find *"Drowning in a Sea of Bliss"* to be a rather lazy record. There are more than a few interesting noises, but it doesn't sound like much thought or inspiration went into the album as a whole. I can live quite comfortably without this record, but, who knows, it might be your cup of bile. Just make sure you give it a listen before you shell out the measly arm and leg it's going to cost you to own your own copy. Technology doesn't come cheap.

Steve Robertson

Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds

From Her to Eternity

From the wreckage of the Birthday Party, Nick Cave emerges with his gothic horror show intact, albeit much refined: from the Sex-Horror-Vampire-BIIITE of a Bram Stoker to the oh-so-subtle terror of an Isak Dinesen. As usual, Cave delves into stuff we all would rather not think about: death, fear, desertion, loneliness; and, for a change, he has his emotions barely under control, except for that incredible eruption at just the right moment. Nick admits to calculated excesses in both singing and music in the past, but this record is largely free of them. This is not to say that old Nick has wimped out; *From Her to Eternity* will grip your vitals until it hurts.

The Bad Seeds consist of ex-B.P. drummer and guitarist Mick Harvey, ex-Magazine bassist Barry Adamson, Blixa Bargeld of Einstuerzende Neubaten on guitar, Hugo Race on guitar, and Cave's paramour Anita Lane on piano. They play as well together as anyone could in trying to interpret Cave's baroque, dense material.

Every song on this record has something going for it, mostly in the effective interaction between the rhythm section (bass and drums) and the guitar and piano at the high end. Bargeld's and Race's guitar work is at times understated, leaving the rhythm section to carry the feel of the song (as in "Avalanche"), and at times like a buzzsaw. As with the Birthday Party, the sound is usually bottom heavy.

Nick's vocals are, at times, a dissertation, and, at times, a shamanistic chant. I don't claim to understand everything in the lyrics, so the readers will be spared a literary analysis. A lot of it is obscure, but I don't know whether this obscurity is deliberate or the normal labyrinthine product of Cave's bent mind. The lyrics do, however, have an unmistakable spiritual feel to them, considering god (God), spiritual passion, and the life everlasting malevolently but enviously. He won't be able to have his true love love him on "Wings Off Flies" until he finds a one-winged fly. An interesting predicament.

Altogether a twisted, bizarre, sick album, but an overpowering and compelling one. Great!

Bats Belfry

Legendary Pink Dots

The Tower

People who expect to be totally dumbfounded by anyone with a name like The Legendary Pink Dots should approach their latest LP with less trepidation than first reactions might indicate. The group makes wide use of mechanical and electronic gadgetry -- each song immediately comes across as "really different"-- but everything about the album is treated so carefully that a first-time listener is struck by its intimacy more than anything else.

There is nothing worse than having someone sit you down in the middle of a room, stick on an unfamiliar record and say "Listen to the WORDS!" or "Ignore the electronic noise and listen to the MELODY in the TREBLE!" If one aspect of a new musical encounter requires special emphasis in order to be appreciated, other facets are in danger of being regarded as weakened. Artists who try to incorporate MEANINGFUL prose into their music often succeed only in appearing maudlin or self-indulgent. The Legendary Pink Dots have avoided this situation. All the lyrics are placed where they can be understood perfectly; but it's also possible to flow with the mood set up by the music. The use of violins and other conventional instruments in pre-set, classical forms lends an exotic, slightly world-weary appeal which is never allowed to lapse into cornball. Just when you're about to say, "Uh, oh ... that sounds like early Tuxedomoon" or "Hmmm ... shades of Fad Gadget," some subtle or not-so-subtle effect interrupts your constant search to find a slot for this album. None of the cuts on the "Tower" are harmless. Suicidal tendencies abound; but by underplaying the production end and opting for a "small" sound with relatively simple mix-downs, the Dots have kept from resembling something from the distant psychedelic world of early Pink Floyd and other creative but prehistoric giants of the early '70s.

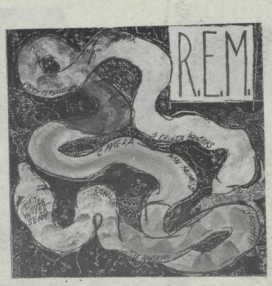
Legendary Pink Dots will not suit everyone's taste. They are different. However, they are not, despite their name, an obscure band that some frustrated audiophile has dredged out of self-imposed oblivion solely to inflict some new musical wound on a public which it sometimes seems will listen to anything while at other times subsists on a diet of commercial FM. Buy this album. Listen to it alone. The Legendary Pink Dots have many things to tell you.

--Larry Thiessen

... more Vinyl

R.E.M.

Reckoning



Reckoning: aka File Under Water. The music of R.E.M. has a rich and pastoral quality about it which sets the record apart from most others. Their sound, though an amalgam of so many recognizable elements (from the Byrds to the Allman Brothers) is, conversely, individual. The band itself is composed of a group of likeable, hard working, thoughtful, sincere people. Yet the whole is much more than the sum of the parts. I could never confuse R.E.M. or their music with any other band. And so we encapsulate R.E.M. But there is also more. There is, for instance, Michael Stipe. And there is Peter Buck. In a sense, R.E.M.'s energy derives from the contrast of these characters. Stipe, of the mournful, almost monochromatic, but expressive voice, is the lyricist. Stipe's lyrics always touch me, but I must admit: I don't know what the hell he's on about. It seems his lyrics vacillate (roughly) between the extremes of emotional involvement: distance and warmth, trust and mistrust, revelation and concealment. Stipe recently told of a time when he would not allow his songs to use "I" and "You" -- those were too personal. Stipe's lyrics always deal with the general and the ambiguous and the abstract (for several reasons): a) they undergo an "emotional editing" with the rest of the band identifying parts they don't like or suggesting alternatives; b) Stipe wants his lyrics to be "emotionally true but yet leaving room for broad interpretation;" c) "at the end of the day they are just more pop songs."

Peter buck is the "rock" side of things. He is the musical historial and archivist. He is a stage hound. He fires the band with the energy which has them constantly touring, writing and recording. It is his sense of the past, balanced with Stipe's idealism and freedom from the past which gives R.E.M. that wonderful sound: a sound that is, at once, familiar and comforting yet involving and inventive.

The sound is composed of: a fluid rhythm section, ringing guitars, accents of piano, and splashed of "other" sound which occasionally fill the spaces. It is much much finer and accessible pop music than the appealing but staid likes of Orange Juice, Big Country or (more favorably) Aztec Camera. R.E.M. avoid being staid because they take a chance. Most bands don't take that chance with their second album. R.E.M. do. They have consciously decided to move away from the dense sound of their first, *Murmur*. Instead, they reveal their songs to a much greater extent, both lyrically and musically. For R.E.M., this is a extension and expansion reveals the depth of their writing and playing ability.

R.E.M.'s *Reckoning* reflects the growing maturity of a band. R.E.M. provide, for a second time, that rarest of albums: one which, in a subtle, almost subversive way, challenges the listener. Reckoning is for thinking (interpreting as you will), or for relaxing, or, further yet, for cleaning the house. Put their stories, however obtuse, to good (and varied) use. There are few others so worthwhile.

No. 1

Miles Davis

Decoy

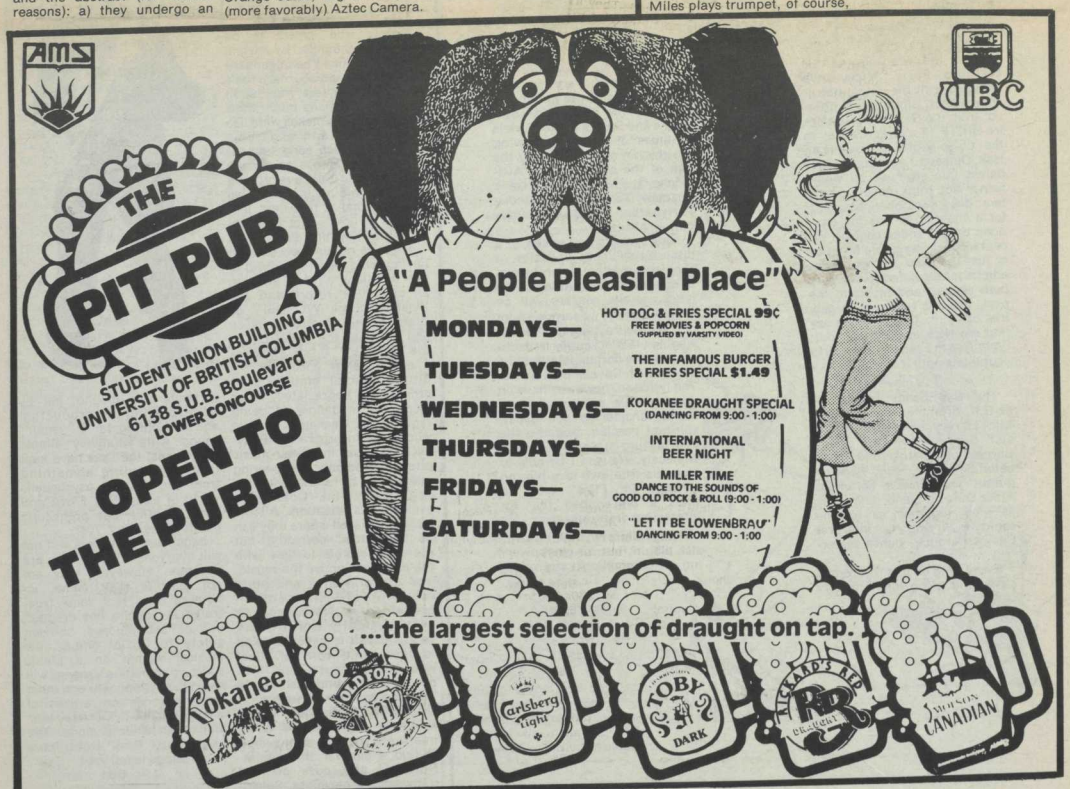
We've all heard the predictions that in 10 years time technology will be an omnipresent force in our lives. Computers will be in every home and office, regulating everything that we do. There will be no function that a person in the Western World can perform without the aid, or interference, of synthetic gimmickry.

It looks like a lot of people creating music these days would like to herald in the age of technology right now. Countless musicians have indulged in their own private techno-trips in the past couple of years (need I name names?); their success in the use of synthesized instruments has depended as much on their attitude toward the synthesizer's place in music as on their technical ability in playing it.

Miles Davis has entered the techno-camp as well on his last few LPs; *Decoy* reveals that he's stuck firmly in those chrome-lined trenches. Using a few funk musicians (on this record Darryl Jones is on bass; Marcus Miller has appeared in the past) and a few people who have real potential as jazz players (e.g., Bill Evans and Branford Marsalis on soprano saxes), Davis has put together songs with such titles as "Robot 415" and "Code M.D." Miles plays trumpet, of course, and, it being his album, gives himself space to develop a few interesting solos: not great, mind you, by his previous standards, but at least they're decent. Unfortunately, Miles has also taken up the synthesizer along with his sideman/co-producer Robert Irving III. It sounds as if one of them is chained to the controls at all times, for synthesizer is *everywhere*. People should be issued licenses to use these things, after they've passed a test that keeps gratuitous noodling like this in check. The problem with the synths as used here is that the intensity of single notes doesn't vary; this flattens some beautiful sounds being produced by the other musicians. "That's Right" has some lovely trade-offs between Marsalis and guitarist John Scofield that settle down into a great blues groove; what's stuck on top are synthesizer bits that to me have absolutely no purpose. I wanted to take an icepick to the grooves and try to peel those bits right off. It happens again and again on *Decoy*'s seven tracks, and it's frustrating as hell.

Not only is it annoying to try to listen to *Decoy* closely, as one would a jazz album, it doesn't work as funk music either; it simply doesn't *move*. The only place I would listen to a record like this is driving around in a car, like so much other cow fodder music. That's a shame, 'cause the players on *Decoy* could be capable of something so much better.

Fiona MacKay



PERSUADIN'

Fiona MacKay sings along ...

"When we were in Chicago, we went to this Swedish restaurant, and this lady said, 'I thought you were nice guys, but I read the paper this morning, and I hear that you go up there on stage singing in the a cappella.'''

"We said, 'No, wait a minute, you don't understand ....'''

"She goes, 'Doesn't a cappella mean with nothing?'''

"Yeah, without *instruments*''

"Oh, and I thought you was up there singing with no clothes.''

Such misconceptions are the price The Persuasions pay for being one of the few groups in the world who perform exclusively without instrumental backing. The Persuasions have been singing together since 1962, keeping alive a style of music that was dying out in the early '60s. Today there are quite a number of a cappella groups performing and recording (The Persuaserettes and The Nylons, to name just a couple more); they all owe a great debt to The Persuasions for persevering for 22 years producing music that runs the gamut from R & B to gospel, pop, protest and work songs.

The four Persuasions --Jerry Lawson (lead), Jimmy Hayes (bass), Toubo Rhoad (baritone) and Jayotis Washington (tenor)-- met in the Bedford-Stuyvesant district of Brooklyn, each having previously performed in different groups. Lawson is originally from Florida, Hayes from Virginia, Rhoad from South Carolina and Washington from Detroit; Jayotis says, "Someone had something for us to do. We just thank the Lord that we met up.''

What has resulted is a career spanning 13 albums, only one of which features instruments of any kind, on both independent and major labels. Their first came out on Frank Zappa's Straight label; their latest, **No Frills**, has just been released on Rounder Records. No hit singles yet, but they're working on it.

The Persuasions love to sing, and sing they do -- all the time. During the course of our interview, no less than three times did they stretch their vocal chords on "I Can See Clearly Now,'' "Cab Driver'' and "Jesus is on the Mainline.''

The way they arrange their songs is perfectly simple: someone has an idea and they just start to work it out, whether it be on the subway or at home. "We were on a bus once in London, and I had this idea for a song; so I started to sing, and the rest of the group joined in. I took off my hat halfway through the song, and the people started to throw money in it, and I said, 'Keep singing! We're going to be loaded by the time we get back to the hotel!'''

The group has toured with such performers as Stevie Wonder and Joni Mitchell, and they've had to travel abroad. They've played all over the U.S., Canada and Europe, of course, but also to the Middle East: "Those cities like Haifa and Jaffa are so old, it's amazing. When we were in Israel we thought that we should sing 'Jesus is on the Mainline'' since this was the Holy Land, so we started up and I thought we were cooking, but the manager of the club comes running up and stops us right in the middle of our set: 'No Jesus! No Jesus! You can sing "Jesus'' in Jerusalem, but this is Tel Aviv: you sing "Moses!''''''

Years of singing before audiences have given The Persuasions a very relaxed stage manner; the same casual banter that goes on in an interview situation happens spontaneously on the stage as well. They'll give an audience 10 minutes to come up with a song that they can't sing; they invite the audience to come up on stage and sing with them (after which they leave the room); Jerry Lawson will hand over the mike to people sitting near the stage. This is definitely not a band for the self-conscious, but you'll be amazed at the effect that their philosophy of song has on you. Jayotis Washington puts it very succinctly: "There is no music, no sound, that you can't recreate with the human voice alone.'' He's probably right. I know that I went out to the end of my backyard after their Plazaaz show, and I sang for about 10 minutes to hear what my voice could do. And I know that there is probably no other band that could have made me do that. Persuasion is the word.

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PERSUASIONS DISCOGRAPHY

Acapella, 1967, Reprise Records (RS 6394 Straight), out of print

We Came to Play, 1971 and 1975, Capitol Records (ST 79 and SM791)

Street Corner Symphony, 1972, Capitol Records (ST 872)

Spread the Word, 1972, Capitol Records (ST 11101), out of print

We Still Ain't Got No Band,' 1973, A & M Records (MCA 326), out of print

More Than Before, A & M Records (MCA 3635), out of print

I Just Want to Sing with My Friends, A & M Records (MCA 3656), out of print

Chirpin', 1976, Elektra/Asylum Records (1099)

Comin' At Ya, 1979, Flying Fish Records (FF 093) (Flying Fish, 1304 W. Schubert, Chicago, IL 60614)

Good News, 1980, Rounder Records

Just Us, 1984, Rounder Records (3083) (Rounder Records, 186 Willow Ave., Somerville, MA 02144)

In town, records by The Persuasions can be found at Scorpio, Highlife and Black Swan.

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50 Most Played Bands on CITR

1. Lou Reed
2. Laurie Anderson
3. Public Image Limited
4. David Bowie
5. Poisoned [with Art Bergmann]
6. The Clash
7. Peter Gabriel
8. The Cramps
9. Echo and the Bunnymen
10. The Cure
11. Mike Club
12. New Order
13. Brian Eno [and friends]
14. Siouxsie and the Banshees
15. Special AKA
16. Shriekback
17. Gang of Four
18. Iggy Pop [and the Stooges]
19. R.E.M.
20. Nina Hagen
21. Holger Czukay
22. Kraftdinner
23. King Crimson
24. Elvis Costello [and the Imposter]
25. X
26. The Residents
27. Trevor Jones
28. Rank and File
29. The Beverley Sisters
30. Violent Femmes
31. Malcolm X
32. Simple Minds
33. Hiroshi Yano
34. Dead Kennedys
35. Kraftwerk
36. Talking Heads
37. Roxy Music
38. Fabulon
39. Family Plot
40. Killing Joke
41. Tones on Tail
42. Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark
43. Actionauts
44. Bauhaus
45. Joy Division
46. The Stranglers
47. Emily
48. Shanghai Dog
49. Bill Nelson
50. Kate Bush

After a prolonged absence, the blurb returns. Soon to be made into a major motion picture, starring: Lou Reed, Peter Gabriel, and a group of men in tuxedos wearing enormous ocular organs. Yes, folks, it's the CITR Mole Show, with the Residents tunnelling their way to number 26 this month! What a group! What a concept! An LP with George Gershwin on one side and James Brown covers on the other. Lou Reed (no relation) leads the moles, with a New LP doing very well. Did you ever wonder **why** he wears sunglasses all the time? He and Peter Gabriel struggle in the darkness, new releases succeeding and vaulting them into the top 10. Confused? Good.

Notes ... Poisoned perpetuates Mr. Bergmann's reputation as a local hero and jams the reception of Psychic Healers somewhat ... The Mike Club, another local act, make a hit with their two demo-tape songs, sadly, they're now defunct ... Who the hell is Kraftdinner anyway? ... If they're so anonymous, perhaps they're related to Malcolm X, who's not even alive. Keith Leblanc is the man with the skeleton in his closet (or his studio, one could say) ... The Mole Show welcomes back the Actionauts, but we are left with one burning question ... What's an actionaut?

Coming soon to a bedspread near you. Catch it!

--Jason

Final Vinyl

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Sat. -- This week's model -- CITR's #1 Playlist LP
Sun. -- Fast Forward's Neglected LP -- the mail brings many surprises -- you'll hear 'em here.

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Mon 02	Rockpilers
Tues 03	Peter Hamill
Wed 04	American Garage Pt. 2
Thu 05	Durutti Column
Fri 06	Jayne County
Sat 07	David Jones Presents
Mon 09	Jerry Lee Lewis Pt. 1
Tue 10	Flag of Convenience
Wed 11	Art Bergmann -- This Is Your Life
Thu 12	John Foxx
Fri 13	Oingo Boingo
Sat 14	"Punk and Disorderly"
Mon 16	Jerry Lee Lewis Pt. 2
Tue 17	Deviant States of Mind
Wed 18	American Garage Pt. 3
Thu 19	Nick Cave and friends
Fri 20	Wild Man Fischer
Sat 21	Swell Maps
Mon 23	Jerry Lee Lewis Pt. 3
Tue 24	The Residents
Wed 25	Johnny Cash
Thu 26	Ian Hunter
Fri 27	The Zombies
Sat 28	Rock Fashion - the 1970s
Mon 30	Jerry Lee Lewis Pt. 4
Tue 31	Rip, Rig, And Panic

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8	• • new music, local and international MUSIC OF • OUR TIME. • • for the	BREAKFAST REPORT: 8am · makes you a well informed early riser.					
		PUBLIC AFFAIRS: 9am·9:20					
10	contemporary • listener.	MORNING NEWSBREAK 10am for the not so early riser.					folk International* music's roots are explored by Lawrence, or Vijay.
		MUSIC*					
12	NEWS SUN. BRUNCH poets, plays & • presentation						NOON NEWS AFRICAN SHOW
1	REGGAE FOR RASTA! ROCK ERS I'RIE MON	LUNCH REPORT: 1pm · news and info. to munch by.					The Max Burmeister Show
		MUSIC					
3	daffy fun & gratuitous frivolity... SUNDAY• AFTERNOON • SHOW	NEWSBREAK: 3:30 pm					CITR's top 40 albums
		SPORTSBREAK 4:30 Hips & hoorays for the sportier listener.					PLAYLIST SHOW & singles with the MD's
6	SUNDAY MAG special news feature.	DINNER REPORT: 6pm news and info. to digest & discuss.					SATURDAY • • MAGAZINE special week·end news.
7	MUSIC						
8	SUN. NIGHT • LIVE!. •	HIGH PROFILE: 8 pm · Various artists and their music highlighted * unkown tracks * career facts					
9	host Mark Mushet delves weekly into...						
10	..FAST.. FORWARD	JAZZ				MIXING... • • the 1, 2, 3	PAJAMA· PARTY
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